

Four Million Homes

Knowledge and action for change in social housing

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Ministry of Housing,
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Four Million **Homes**

Why Fire Safety Matters to Social Tenants

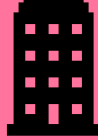
Protecting lives, homes and communities

Presenters: Abraham Nomafo, Loraine Ophelia, Giles Holley & Jan Taranczuk

The Human Cost

- Fires are fast and toxic: smoke can overwhelm in minutes 
- Most fatalities are from smoke inhalation, not burns 
- Vulnerable residents (mobility, health, language barriers) face higher risk 

The Community Impact

- A single flat fire can disrupt an entire block 
- Evacuations, rehousing, and trauma affect neighbours 
- Repairs and insurance claims can take months 

Lessons from Tragedies

- Major incidents show how small hazards escalate
- Outcomes depend on good design, clear information, and resident awareness



Building Safety Act 2022

Legal context – reform building safety regulation and enhance fire safety in higher risk buildings - over 18 metres. Main provisions were to introduce:-

- Building Safety Regulator (BSR), which will oversee and enforce compliance
- Accountable Person with legal responsibility for building safety.
- Duty holders – clients, contractors and designers criminally liable to ensure buildings meet current safety regulations
- Stringent safety standards including regular inspections, risk assessments, and the implementation of safety measures such as fire safety systems, cladding remediation, and improved structural integrity.
- “Golden thread,” a digital record of information about a building's design, construction, and maintenance being available
- Hearing resident voices - establish effective channels of communication with tenants, keeping them informed about safety-related issues, inspections, and remedial works.

Grenfell Inquiry Outcomes

72 people – including 18 children, lost their lives in the terrible fire in June 2017. Phase 2 of the inquiry concluded last year with the recommendations published in February 2025.

61 recommendations made with the government accepting 58 – Phase 1 PEEPs to be implemented April 2026 - details to be held in information boxes only if resident consents.

- Remediation Acceleration Plan - £1bn invested in speeding up cladding remediation
- Social housing reforms – increasing housing investment ‘Awaabs Law’, strengthening tenant voices, improved information and access
- Construction reforms – single construction regulator, expertise in Approved documents, product procurement, fire engineers etc.
- Improvements the Fire and Rescue Service including training, regulations and decision making processes
- Rescue and recovery – building national resilience and addressing disproportionate societal impacts

Your Building's Fire Strategy (Know It!)

- Stay Put vs Full Evacuation: which applies where you live? 
- Compartmentation: walls/floors designed to hold back fire and smoke 
- Protection systems: alarms, sprinklers, fire doors, smoke vents 

Landlord Responsibilities

- Carry out and review fire risk assessments
- Maintain life-safety systems (alarms, emergency lighting, fire doors)
- Keep common parts clear and safe (no obstructions, correct signage)
- Provide residents with clear information and instructions



Resident Responsibilities

- Keep escape routes clear: no items in corridors or on stairs
- Never wedge open fire doors—report faults instead
- Test smoke/heat alarms monthly
- Allow access for safety inspections and maintenance
- Use permitted appliances safely; avoid DIY wiring

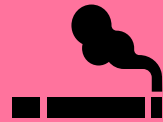


Top Causes of Home Fires

- Cooking left unattended (especially frying)



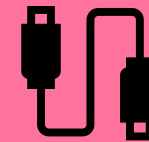
- Smoking materials



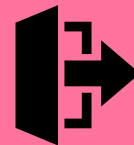
- Overloaded sockets and faulty chargers



- Heaters/clothes on heaters; unsafe e-bike/e-scooter charging



- Clutter that fuels fire and blocks escape



Sources of ignition

Source:

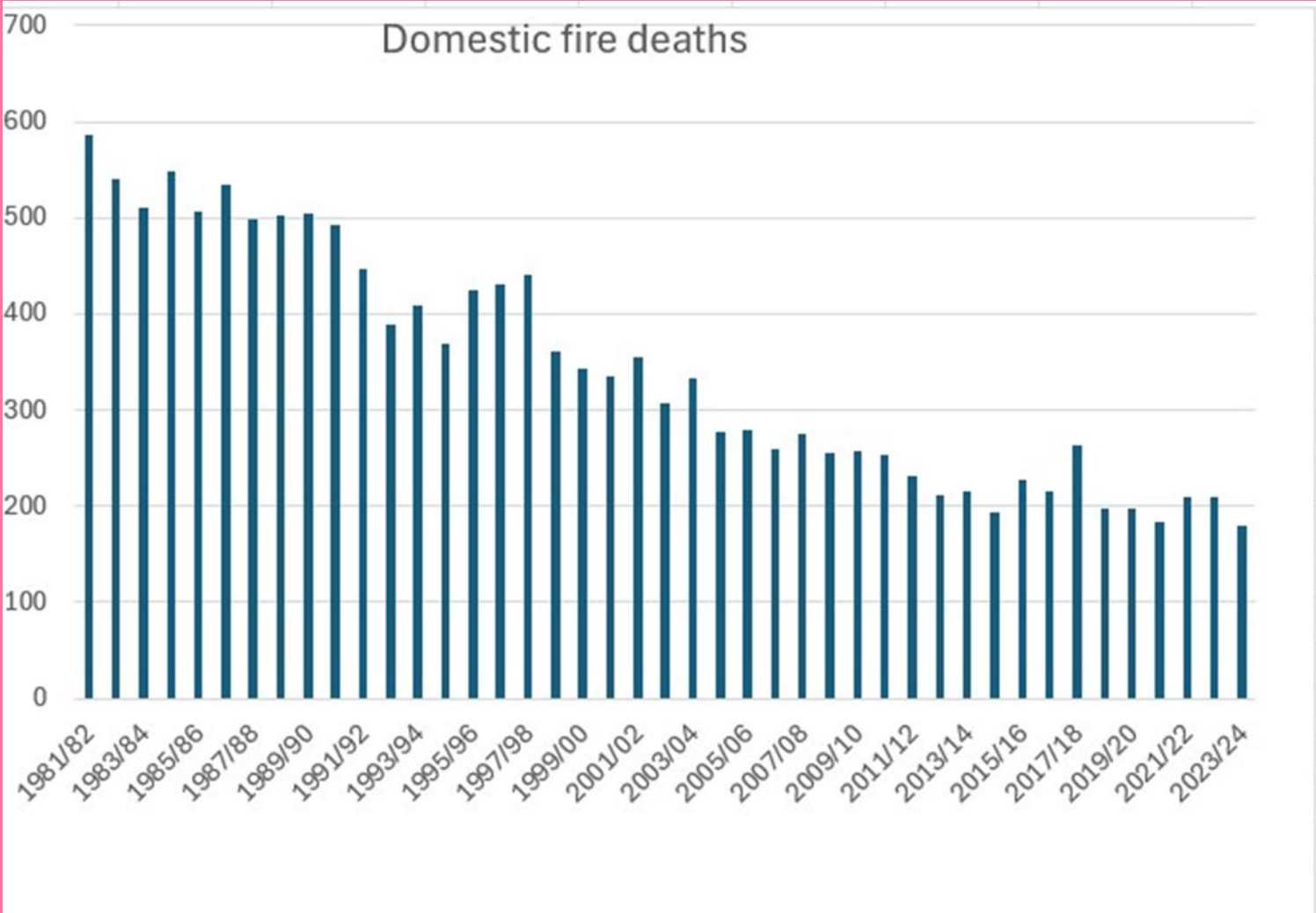
- Smoker's materials
- Space heating appliances
- Cigarette lighters
- Matches

Rate of fatal fire per 1,000:

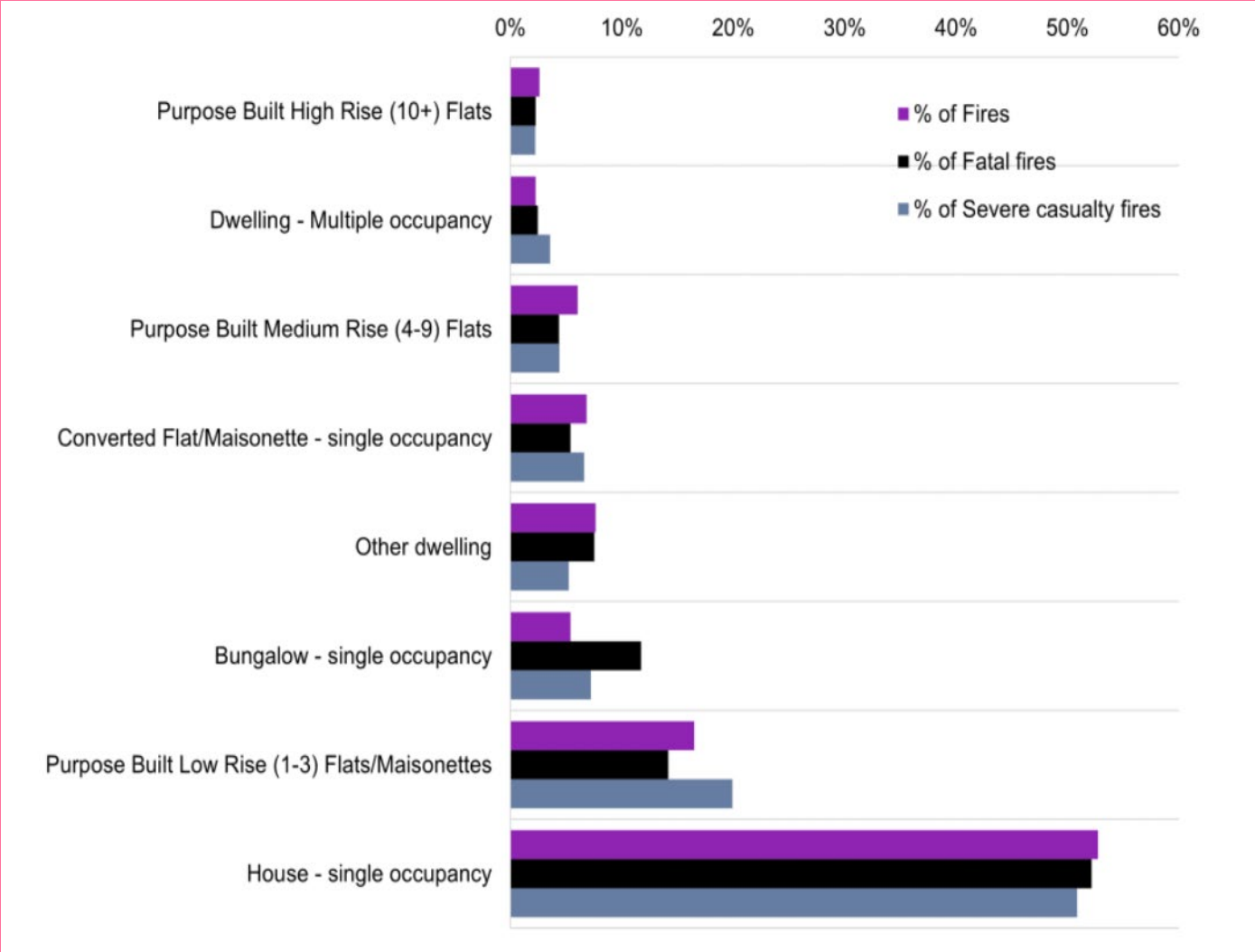
- 18.3
- 11.8
- 9
- 4.1

Where smoker's materials were the source: 44% involved drugs/alcohol

Domestic fire deaths



Fatal and severe casualty fires 2011 to 2019

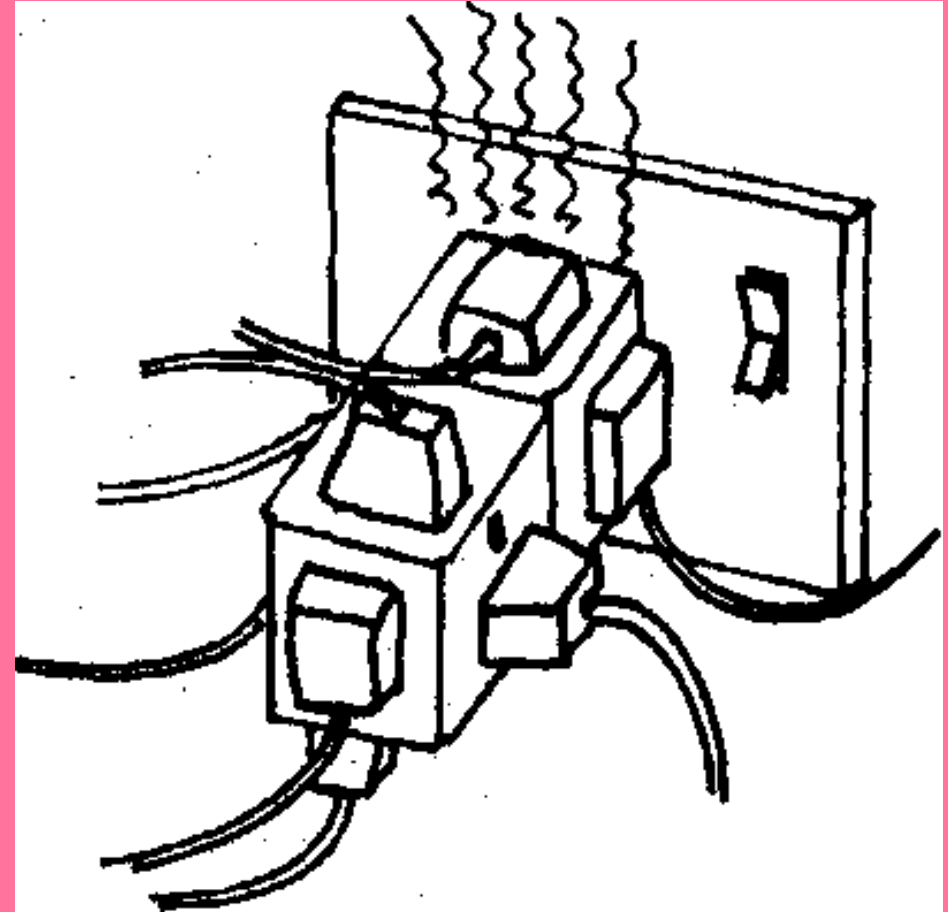


**In 21/22:
the male fatality rate was 5.9 per million,
for women 3.6 per million.**



Practical Prevention Tips

- Kitchen: Stay with your cooking; use timers; keep tea towels/aerosols away from hobs
- Electrics: One plug per socket; use fused extension leads (not cubes); charge on hard surfaces; unplug once charged
- Living Areas: Keep exits clear; manage clutter



E-Bikes & E-Scooters

- Only use chargers and batteries from the original manufacturer
- Do not charge in escape routes or while sleeping
- Stop using if battery is damaged, swollen, hot, or smells



Fire Doors: Small Actions, Big Protection

- Fire doors resist fire/smoke spread; self-closers must work
- Report any damage, gaps, or doors that don't latch
- Don't drill, cut, or add hooks/bolts without permission

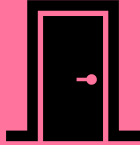
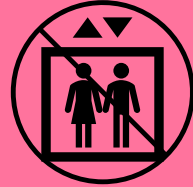


Plan & Practice Your Escape

- Know all exit routes; keep keys where everyone can find them
- If smoke in corridor: stay low, use back-up route, close doors behind you
- If you can't leave: go to a room with a window, block gaps, call 999



If There's a Fire in a Flat

- Get out, stay out, call 999 
- Close doors to slow fire spread 
- Don't use lifts during a fire unless told it's safe by fire crews 

If “Stay Put” Applies in Your Block

- If fire is in your flat: evacuate your flat and call 999
- If fire is elsewhere and your flat is unaffected: stay inside unless told otherwise
- Keep doors/windows closed; await instructions from fire service



Support for Residents with Additional Needs

- Tell your landlord if you need help: mobility, vision/hearing, cognitive, language
- Ask about personal emergency planning and building measures
- Consider simple aids (vibrating alarms, strobe alerts)



Reporting & Repairs

Use the repairs line/app/portal to report:

- Faulty alarms, lighting, fire doors, smoke vents
- Blocked exits or stored items in common areas
- Escalate if issues aren't resolved—keep a record (dates, photos)



Myths vs Facts

- “Propping the door for a minute is fine” → It isn’t
- “I’ll smell smoke in time” → You may not; smoke is toxic and fast
- “Chargers are safe under pillows” → They overheat; charge on hard surfaces



Quick Home Safety Checklist

- Working alarms on every level
- Clear exits and visible keys
- Safe charging and tidy wiring
- Cooking never left unattended
- Fire doors in good condition



What To Do After a Fire

- Don't re-enter until told it's safe 
- Contact landlord and insurer 
- Seek support for trauma and rehousing needs

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Takeaways & Next Steps

- Fire safety is a shared responsibility
- Small daily habits prevent big incidents
- Know your building plan; report faults promptly



Questions



Four Million Homes

Thank you for taking part

To find out more and get involved, visit **fourmillion.org**

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Evaluation Survey



<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/fourmillionhomesonline>